

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

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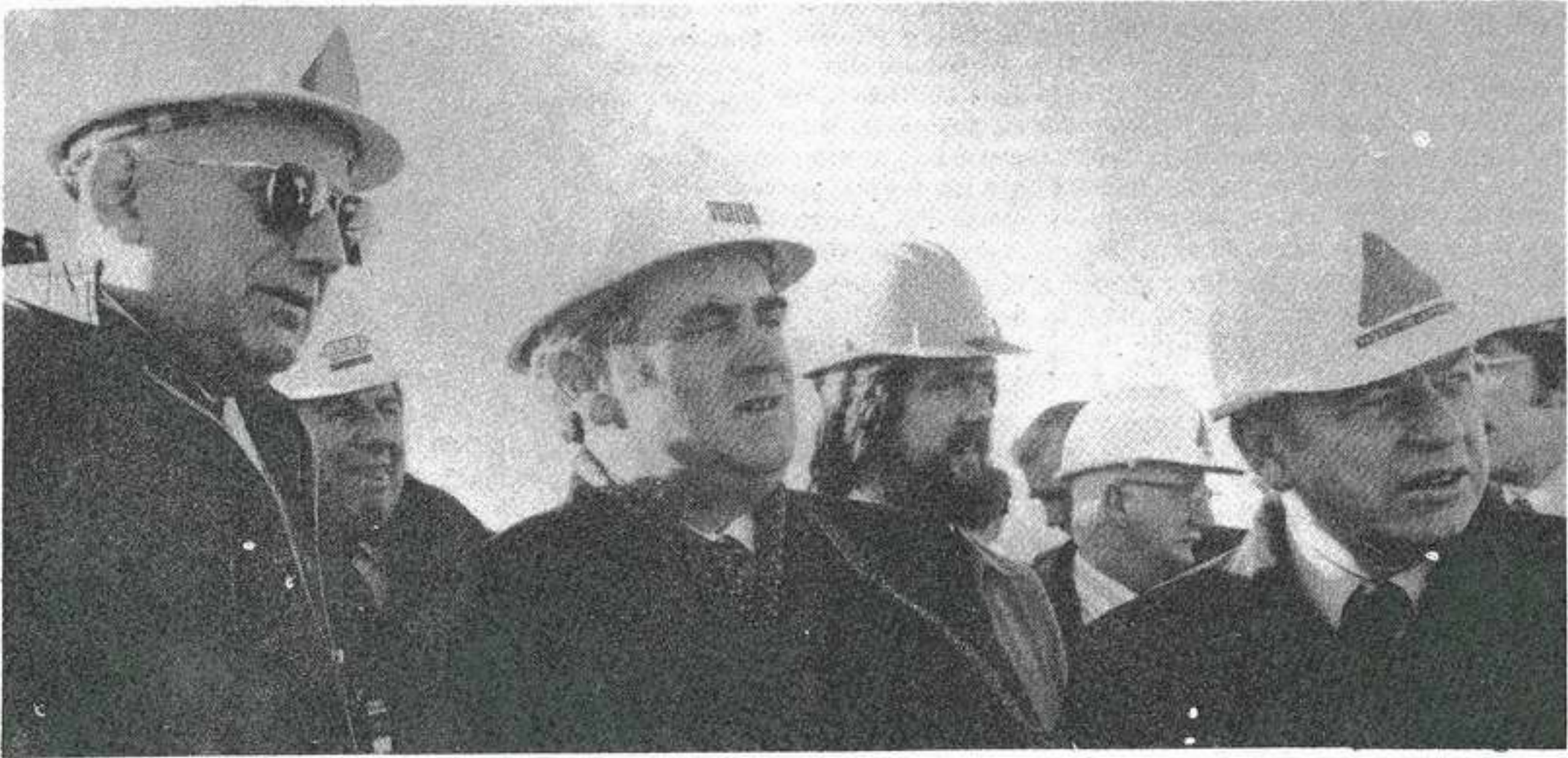
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VOL. 9 NO. 8

THE
VOICE
OF THE
WORKER

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic . . .'
James Connolly

ALUMINA AND SHOP STEWARDS



THE PAT FEELEY CASE



POLITICAL ROUNDABOUT

EMS SHAMBLES

A year and a half ago we entered the European Monetary System under the delusion that breaking the link with sterling would lead to better times for all. According to our political leaders, for too long we had been tied to the sick man of Europe, namely Britain, and by breaking the link with sterling and joining the EMS we were guaranteed lower interest rates with all the attendant benefits - lower mortgage rates, more houses, more jobs, etc. The most enticing benefit, however, was the one that held that because our economy was supposedly much stronger than Britains we would be no longer tied to the doomed Brits.

Well, the state of the doomed Brits, indicated by the strength of its currency, was shown after joining the EMS - the Irish punt dropped (in spite of the Central Bank efforts to prevent it) below ninety pence to the British pound. Since then, the punt has hovered at around 90 pence. Interest rates are at a record high level and job losses this year are expected to be at least 20,000. Every single item that we import from Britain is costing us 10% extra plus. The plus is for the retailer and shopkeeper of course. Remember the change over to decimalization!

One cannot suggest that joining the EMS is the cause of all our problems but it is increasing our inflation rate by at least 5% annually.

Recently a government Minister tried to wring some advantage from the EMS by saying that our exports to Britain were now more competitive. But a recent survey showed that most exporting companies, rather than lowering their prices on the British market and thereby gaining a competitive edge, were in fact keeping their prices at the old level and pocketing the difference. But was anyone really surprised to hear that?

On the practical side, co-operation between North and South was pushed even further away by introducing two separate currencies for the two parts of the island. Before joining the EMS there was a steady stream of people from the border counties crossing to the North for their weekly shopping, and as a spin-off from this there was an intermingling on a commercial basis, of people from both parts. This interchange has now slowed down.

But still the alleged benefits of the EMS are extolled, admittedly to a decreasing number of people.

OF SAINTS AND MEN

An interesting anecdote to the recent Papal decision to beatify Caterina Yekakwitha, the first American Indian to be given such an honour by the Roman Catholic Church for refusing to renounce her faith, appeared in the letters page of the Observer.

A member of the Russian Orthodox Church in exile pointed out that St. Peter the Abbot, an Alaskan Eskimo, was martyred in San Francisco in 1815 for also refusing to renounce his faith. He writes: "His torture was agonizing, dismemberment limb by limb. His torturers? Sadly enough, some over-zealous Roman Catholic missionaries".

And he wasn't even a communist!

THE NOT-SO-AFFLUENT UNEMPLOYED

Mythology took another knock recently with the publishing of a report on a census taken by the Department of Employment in England of the financial situation of the unemployed.

This important investigation found that only 3 per cent

by **JOE HARTNETT**

of those covered in the survey were getting more in unemployment benefits compared to their previous earnings. Weekly benefit income was on average £34.40 less than the earnings in their previous employment. More than half of the unemployed found it impossible to live on unemployment benefit and consequently "had failed to meet one or more of a number of payments like rent, mortgage or fuel bills."

There is no reason to believe that the unemployed in this country are any better off, and without a similar survey being carried there is no definite way of telling. However, the myth continues, usually nurtured at the after-dinner speeches by well-heeled businessmen and employer representatives.

One of the most recent surveys on poverty was carried out in the mid-seventies, a time of unprecedented boom. It found that 25 per cent of the population lived on or below the poverty line. The poverty line was defined as having enough to eat.

Unfortunately, dispassionate research rarely has any effect on the policy-makers, and except for a few banner headlines, the findings are quickly forgotten and still the myths live on.

A SECULAR EDUCATION?

The recent proposal that the Catholic teacher training colleges in Belfast should be amalgamated with the state-run college in the same city has brought the expected response from the Catholic hierarchy. This time in the shape of Dr. Edward Daly, Bishop of Derry, who invokes the charter of Human Rights and the European Convention to give credence to his conviction that there should be separate education for different religions. Of course, Dr. Daly is not as blunt as that. He hides behind the smokescreen of parents having the right to educate their children in the beliefs and practices of their faith.

There is no one who denies that parents have the right to educate their children in the beliefs of their choice. But there is a growing number of people who believe that it is not necessary to segregate children on the basis of religion in order to educate them. There is no reason why children (or adults) of different religious backgrounds should not be educated together, and when it comes to religious instruction either they can be segregated for their respective religious instruction, or ideally, that religion be taught as a subject to the assembled class with the emphasis on the Christian basis of their religion rather than on the man-made theological differences that separate Catholic from Protestant.

Northern Ireland to-day is organized into two communities under the heading of Protestants and Catholic. Every group interest, whether it is political, sporting, paramilitary, employment group or participants in the different marching seasons is predominately Protestant or Catholic, and anyone to-day who says that religion doesn't play a major part in the strife of the North is not facing facts.

The preaching of the hierarchy for reconciliation and eucumism sounds very hollow indeed when they refuse to allow children to be educated together and insist that they be segregated on the basis of their religion.

No one believes that the integration of education will solve the major problems in Irish society overnight. This move would, however, help to unite society in Northern Ireland and the benefits would be apparent in the next generation. As G.B. Shaw once wrote: "There is only one religion, though there are a hundred versions of it."

The Pat Feeley case

CASTLEISLAND in Co. Kerry, is like many small towns in Ireland, going through the ups and downs of life at its own leisurely pace. But also like our small towns, the division between the "have and have not" is ugly and sharp. In Castleisland, the "haves" in the shape of the McElligott family own a lot - in fact, virtually the whole town, plus part of Tralee. Their name adorns the garages, supermarkets, electrical and hardware shops, a pub and farm servicing business in Castleisland. The other necessary ingredient to complete the baron image is that the late Paddy McElligott was Fine Gael chairman of the Kerry County Council.

When the relationship between the McElligotts the employers and their garage staff was featured on a radio programme called "One Happy Family", last January, all hell broke loose. The subsequent events would make drama enough for a radio or TV programme - the political pull which led RTE to set up a tribunal of investigation, the hiring of a private detective to investigate the producer's background, the disciplining of the producer and his supervisor, the national headlines of the scandal rocking RTE.

Pat Feeley, who produced "One Happy Family" is a Jacob's Award winner for his service to the media. He has specialised in documentaries, mostly of a local character. He also has done programmes of labour history content. An active member of the Federated Workers' Union of Ireland, he has given various lectures to the Labour History Society on dramatic incidents in Irish labour history.

In his programme "One Happy Family" he was concerned to show the social patterns which created the rural employer and the sway they held in the small towns. The programme introduction was done by M. O'Higgins, the Labour Party politician, who stressed the sociological and cultural aspects of the rural employing class. Feeley then focussed on the actual conditions under which the mechanics worked in the McElligott garage in Tralee. The mechanics spoke for themselves about the unhygienic conditions, lack of facilities, the management behaviour and the low wages. Corroborative evidence of the health factor in small town garages and enterprises was given by a local doctor. To round off the picture, the local Irish Transport and General Workers' Union response had not righted any of these wrongs. To balance the story the producer wrote a number of times to the McElligotts asking them to take part in the programme, but they refused.

KICK BACK

The kickback came after the programme went on the air. It was due to be repeated, but after protest from the McElligott family, the Society for the Irish Motor Industry and the Federated Union of Employers it was cancelled. A tribunal of enquiry was set up by RTE management to examine the programme and its "unbalance".

This was a most unusual step as no such machinery has ever been agreed with the strong unionised labour force there. After a lot of wrangling Feeley and his immediate Head of Documentaries, Dick Warner, were carpeted. Warner's fate is that his contract may not be renewed, while Pat Feeley was demoted from producer to researcher. The latter punishment was intended to be so severe that he would resign. A mistake made by Feeley was revealed by private investigators hired by management who interviewed his family. He had denied to the Tribunal that he had any relations involved but in fact a

cousin of his worked in the garage. At this stage however the Union had instructed Feeley and Warner to withdraw from the whole management exercise.

AUTHORITY

As the RTE Authority is appearing to rock from crisis to crisis, the attempts to limit the influence of the Coalition appointed MacConghail, the ominous threats to stifle dissent, the all present political interference, its management seem to take their industrial code from the employing class of "Strumpet City".

RTE provoked a bitter dispute with the research assistants which resulted in an official strike. Tribunals, hiring of private investigators, over-riding of normal established trade union procedures, are not the codes of ethics or conduct expected of a State Authority responsible to the elected representatives. The slogan of the trade union to which Feeley and Warner are members is, "An injury to one is the concern of all" - it could not be more appropriate in their case.

Pat Feeley received widespread support inside and outside RTE. His fellow producers met and voted overwhelmingly to take strike action if he was not reinstated as a producer. The Sinn Fein Workers' Party group, within RTE and in the Federated Workers' Union were, to put it mildly, more than a little lukewarm in the support given. The SFWP representatives allowed their political differences with Feeley to influence their attitude and thereby lost a great opportunity of demonstrating that their party is what it purports to be - a genuine democratic socialist party.

Outside RTE writers, historians, teachers, journalists and a whole variety of concerned people wrote to the newspapers and to RTE protesting against the decision. Faced with this reaction, and with the strike threat still in the air the top managers of the station caved in. Pat Feeley was informed that he was being given back his producer status, though he was not compensated for his loss of more than a month's wages. He is now working in the Irish music department but he is certain to make his presence felt there before long.

Though the dispute has ended, the whole affair has sinister implications, not only for RTE workers, but for every Irish worker. The "dirty tricks" used in the investigation of Feeley's political and private life, and the drastic punishment meted out for the alleged "crime" show that RTE is as ruthless as any employer. And, the case also shows the power of big business in the sanctions it can exercise in closing out any attempts to investigate its sharp practices and exploitation.

Let us hope the Federated Workers' Union and the RTE workers have learned a lesson from the Pat Feeley case.

Get the

Limerick Socialist

every month

DR. LONG WRITES HIS OWN HISTORY of the LIMERICK MEDICAL MISSION

THE DR. LONG STORY

PART THIRTEEN

I had my police escort as usual to give me personal protection, but a surprise kick from an apparently respectable person, or a spit in the face from a passing factory girl, could not always be guarded against. The police assured me it was worse than useless to make any arrests in such cases, as they would not be supported by the magistrates! The police authorities became anxious for my personal safety, and on February 28th the County Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary, a personal friend of mine, wrote to our Secretary, Rev. N.F. Duncan, to inform him that "an extremely hostile feeling to Dr. Long has been from time to time exhibited in Limerick, and the police have repeatedly found it necessary to afford him protection when he appeared in the streets, in order to save him from personal violence. Upon a recent occasion Dr. Long was assailed by a large crowd, and the police, with much difficulty, prevented serious rioting. In fact, Dr. Long's proceedings and presence in Limerick are a menace to the King's peace. Now it is the duty of the police to preserve the peace, and in pursuance of this duty, as well as in the interests of Dr. Long's own safety, it may become necessary to place restriction upon his movements through the city. Under these circumstances it is considered only fair to the Irish Church Missions to place them in possession of the facts, in order that they may consider the desirability of removing Dr. Long, or taking such other steps as may conduce to a better feeling in Limerick".

In reply to the County Inspector, Mr. Duncan wrote: "My Committee are well aware of the outrageous treatment to which Dr. Long has been subjected, and of the nature of the references to him in press and pulpit, constituting, as these do, an incitement to personal injury. I desire further to point out that Dr. Long is acting entirely within his legal rights and is entitled to the same toleration as is freely granted to Roman Catholic propagandists in this country. If Dr. Long were carrying on his work in Spain, Italy, or France, the authorities would see that this toleration was assured to him. We ask you for nothing more than this in Ireland. With regard to your reference to possible restrictions on Dr. Long's movements through the city, I have only to say that any such steps will be taken entirely upon your own responsibility".

This letter from Mr. Duncan was followed, on March 29th, by an official reply to the County Inspector from the Committee of the Irish Church Missions. In this letter the attention of the County Inspector was directed to the full explanation of the nature and methods of the Mission which I had printed and largely circulated soon after "Father" Tierney's first attack. They held that I was acting entirely within my legal rights, and insisted "on adequate steps being taken by the police to deal with the disorderly and lawless element", so as to secure the immunity to which I was fully entitled. The County Inspector was also reminded that neither the Committee nor I had ever asked that personal police protection of the nature instituted by his orders, should be accorded to me, nor did they consider that it at all met the necessities of the case.

The letter continued: "The Committee regret to find that no steps appear now to be taken to check the gathering of hostile crowds when Dr. Long is visiting the houses of patients; recent instances have shown that crowds are

allowed thus to assemble, even in the case of visits to Protestant patients, and to waylay Dr. Long on his reappearance in the street. The Committee deem it intolerable that this state of things should be allowed to continue; they cannot permit the authorities to evade their responsibilities by declaring that Dr. Long's presence in Limerick is a 'menace to the King's peace'. The King's peace is menaced when a practically free hand is given to those who deliberately set themselves to intimidate and assault a citizen in the exercise of his legal rights. The Committee note the intimation contained in your letter as to the possible restriction of Dr. Long's movements through the city. Such a course would, in the Committee's view, be not only an interference with the liberty of the subject, unjustifiable in the present case, but would involve a serious responsibility in placing a restriction upon the performance of his duties as a physician. The remedy for the present troubles lies in a faithful and fearless discharge of their duty by the police towards the unruly and evil-disposed. This the Committee will not cease to demand at all costs".

Bishop O'Dwyer was now most energetic in pressing his demand for a Roman Catholic University upon the Government, and, finding that this continued assault upon the Medical Mission was attracting considerable public attention, which was not in his favour, the priests and press, for a time at least, ceased fire, and comparative quietness was restored. My correspondence had been for some time of a very varied character. I received many anonymous letters containing abusive language, and expressing the utmost contempt for myself and the Mission; on the other hand I had letters, some from Roman Catholics, expressing sympathy, and approval of the stand we had taken against priestly tyranny.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE AND THE MISSION

The resources of the Church of Rome in her efforts to destroy the Mission in Limerick were not yet exhausted. Full of confidence that Mr. Hickson had already made its position untenable, and that the police were determined to restrict my movements through the city when visiting patients; and assured of a free hand being allowed to the mob, she considered that all that was now necessary was that a coup de grace should be given to end the agony, and to rid the city for ever of such a pestilential source of infection.

Who could do this so effectively as the Roman Catholic Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, who was at this time visiting Limerick for the Assizes? Through the County Inspector he was informed of Rome's objection to my presence in the city, and he readily lent her a hand. In charging the Grand Jury his Lordship said: "I see that the people of this city have been somewhat excited by the presence of a Doctor Long - I think that is the name. He is an agent of what I believe is described as the Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics. He has been mobbed by the people. Now, of course, any violence on the part of the people is wholly indefensible; it is much to be deprecated. But if the people would take my advice - and I have great interest in this city from old associations -

they would leave these agents of that Society entirely alone. They would pass them and not notice them. They would not make martyrs of them, because, gentlemen, if they make martyrs of them they only secure that the monetary stream comes in greater volume from England. It comes in greater volume from a very pious, a very well-meaning, and, indeed, I would say, a very rich section of the English community. The people should not make martyrs of these agents of this Society. The Protestant community - the respectable Protestant community - of this city and of this country do not in any way associate themselves with these attempts by this so-called Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics. The Irish Church Missions are supported in England by people who are very well-meaning, who are very religious, but who have no conception of the worthlessness of the Irish Church Missions in this country. That is all I say. It is enough."

In this address no reference was made to those who, through pulpit and press, had led the people to acts of violence. "Father" Tierney's incitement to the Confraternity was not mentioned. My presence as an agent of the Irish Church Missions was the sole cause of all the trouble, and the people were advised not to make a martyr of me, not because they would be hanged if they did, but because more money would be sent from England to support the Mission. After reading this address, I first felt inclined to pity myself, and say: "Poor Dr. Long, he is now to be boycotted; the Lord Chief Justice has declared that no respectable Protestant would associate with him; he is to be left entirely alone; his work is worthless; his presence is a crime; there is nothing else against him; but nothing else could be worse".

Soon, however, I began to pity the Lord Chief Justice, for he spoke in ignorance of the work of the Irish Church Missions, and his attack on the Mission only hurt himself. He was abundantly answered in the public press, and was shown how accurate and unfair his statements were.

The following letter from Capt. Tottenham, the Chairman of the Irish Church Missions, was published in the daily papers, in reply to this attack:-

To the Editor of the "Daily Express"

Sir, - My attention has been drawn to certain strictures passed by the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, in his address to the city of Limerick Grand Jury, upon the Society for Irish Church Missions, and reported in your issue of the 7th inst.

The matter will certainly receive the attention of the Committee of that Society at their next meeting. Meanwhile, I feel that it is incumbent on me, as Chairman of the Committee, to ask you to allow me to express my very great surprise and regret at the course taken by the Chief Justice. That a Roman Catholic Judge should allow himself to give expression to his personal prejudices against a Protestant Society on such an occasion is, to my mind, deplorable, whatever his private opinion may be as to what he calls its "worthlessness".

The reference to the Society's supporters, as if they were wholly English, and the supposition that no respectable Protestant supports the Society, can only be attributed to lack of information on the subject. One can hardly imagine that the Lord Chief Justice would thus stigmatise the Society if he knew that it had received the cordial support of such men as, e.g. Archbishops Whately and Plunket, and Lord Cairns, and that it has the valued support to-day of a large number of the clergy and laity of the Church of Ireland.

Few missionary societies receive universal support. None, I venture to think, should be exposed to gratuitous insult such as that offered to the Society for Irish Church Missions by the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland.

Yours faithfully,
F.L. TOTTENHAM, Capt.,
Chairman.

The following striking vindication of the Society from a Roman Catholic was also published by the Daily Express:-

To the Editor of the Daily Express

Sir, Allow a Roman Catholic - one of many Roman Catholics who share my views - to offer a small and feeble protest against the attack made by one of his Majesty's Judges upon the Irish Church Missions. I will pass over the circumstances - it is not for me to say that they were unseemly - but I will say that the charge of "worthlessness" brought by Lord Chief Justice O'Brien is the reverse of true.

It is not long since a publican, either a member of, or connected with, the corporation of Dublin, gave the toast, "God bless Mrs. Smyly", in a circle convivially assembled. He was called on for an explanation, and spoke as follows: "I mean every word of it. But for Mrs. Smyly nothing would ever be done for our poor. So again I say, 'God bless Mrs. Smyly.'" No one could contradict him, and I don't think he drank the toast alone.

The Catholic Church does a great deal to benefit various religious Orders who appear to acquire wealth through advertising poverty. There can be no question that the increase in the number of religious establishments is becoming serious. Who is to support all these people? Somebody must go to the wall; and I am afraid but for Mrs. Smyly our poor would be much more neglected than they are. Take the public institutions. The hospitals are nearly all Protestant; and, odd to say, the poor prefer the Protestant to the Catholic. There was no Prison Gate Mission thought of until the Protestants had established one for some years; Convalescent Homes, Rescue Homes, nothing was ever done for our poor, save under the stimulus of Protestant initiative and example. For years the misfortunes and wretched fate of Irish emigrant girls landing friendless and helpless in New York, formed the subject of talk - talk among Roman Catholics. It was a Protestant lady, Miss O'Brien, who opened a home and shelter for the poor creatures. Her example was followed, as usual, by the nuns. I could multiply instances, but the subject is an ungrateful one. I content myself with assuring readers of the "Express" that there are thousands of Catholics who feel with me a debt of gratitude to the Irish Church Missions, especially that portion of it connected with the venerable lady whom I believe to be still among us. Mrs. Smyly was the great benefactress the Irish Catholics ever had. She gave her life to their service without proclaiming her devotion and self-sacrifice and obedience from every pulpit, or demanding recognition and obedience from the lay body, as if she were superhuman.

I hope you will find space for this note. A feeling of justice impels me to say that I hold the statement of the Lord Chief Justice to be at variance with the truth.

Obediently yours,
"CIS-MONTANE".

At the Medical Mission the work of ministering to the sick in body and soul went on quietly, many expressing their gratitude for all they received in words and deeds. Several were led to conviction of sin and to faith in Christ Jesus alone as their Saviour, and had courage to come out of Rome and to join the Protestant Church. We were all filled with thankfulness to God because the crisis had passed; the great guns of Rome had all been fired, and we rejoiced to find ourselves and the Mission nothing the worse since their discharge. They certainly created a considerable report, which attracted attention over a wide field, and it took some time before we were able to judge our position correctly, owing to the noise, as well as to the dust and smoke, which their discharge had created. We were reminded of the promise of Isaiah: "No weapon that has formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn". Isaiah liv, 17).

THE CORPORATION

PART ONE

FROM SHAWN-A-SCOOB NUMBER 11

MICHAEL HOGAN

But to the City let's return,
 Where broker trade and commerce mourn,
 And squalid misery lifts its head,
 Vainly appealing to be fed;
 Taxes and rates are all the sway,
 And general order of the day;
 Except the devil, no one knows
 Where all the public money goes.
 See the back slums and dingy lanes,
 Enough to suffocate the Danes;
 The hideous plague-fiend may prepare
 His weapons for an onslaught there.
 From the dire stench and sickening smell,
 The devil himself would run pell mell;
 While up the town the watering carts,
 Give shower-baths to the "genteel parts,"
 Laying the dust for fear 'twould rise
 To offend some Mrs. Caudle's eyes;
 The unfashionable lanes and streets,
 Of want and misery the retreats,
 In their foul wretchedness remain,
 Like hell, eternally unclean:
 Till some day, from their putrid parts,
 Contagion with a vengeance starts;
 And walks the dwellings of the town,
 The affrighted people sweeping down,
 Then there is hurrying to and fro,
 Hearses, and palls, and cries of woe;
 Doctors and coffin-makers wade
 Up to their chins in mortal trade;
 From den to den inspectors run,
 To see where cleansing should be done;
 Each dirty wall and dingy lane
 Is white-washed, scoured, and cleansed in vain;
 The wolf had half the herd destroyed,
 Before the remedy was applied,
 It only help'd the legislation
 To clear the surplus population.
 And if the rich could breath secure,
 The devil may care if all the poor
 Sunk down in everlasting sleep,
 In the black chasms of the deep.
 Now, if a Lady Scoob each day
 Made one of those back slums her way,
 The Corporate Scoobs would strike a rate
 To make her pathway clean and neat.
 That lucky lane would soon be made
 A decent, wholesome promenade,
 White-washed and flagged, or powder-paved.
 And from pernicious vapours saved.

But as no lady Scoob will deign
 To visit alley, bow, or lane,
 The corporate humbugs take no care
 Of plague or pest engendering there.
 Their love of justice and fair play
 Is stamped upon the town's decay;
 But let the city stand or fall,
 Their love of learning rivals all.
 A horde of Goths who breathe and act
 By wholesale scheming, fraud and tact;

 A crew of pirates unbaptised,
 Would think and feel more civilized.
 If ever iron Dullness fled
 From learning's light to hide her head,
 'Twas to the Limerick corporate clan
 For shelter and support she ran.
 Ignorance, pride, and puffed conceit
 Have found a temple in the pate
 Of every municipal bore,
 With some exceptions — three or four.
 All the bright lore of Greece and Rome,
 If to the town transmitted home,
 Would not regenerate nor refine
 This grovelling herd of human swine.
 One small transaction here I name,
 Be it recorded to their shame:
 From France to Limerick harbour straight,
 A library was sent of late,
 Bequeathed by a dying man
 To the erudite Corporate Clan;
 Poor man, he really did resign
 His literary pearls to swine;
 For when the books arrived in dock,
 Our Neroes wanted no such stock;
 The freightage they refused to pay,
 The library was cast away
 Into a lumber-store to rot,
 And Bogstick rose to "socond thot"—
 But if into our port was borne
 A freight of rotten Indian corn,
 Swarming with weebles o'er and o'er—
 Delicious dainties for the poor—
 Soon would an anxious rival horde
 Of traffickers the vessel board,
 And purchase up the precious freight,
 To sell it at the highest rate;
 Dollop it well, and send it out
 To make good pauper stirabout;
 The devil may care how soon it may

The starved consumers kill or slay!
 And those who'd do that murdering deed,
 Brazenly profess a Christian creed;
 But, for their souls' sake it were well
 They never heard of heaven or hell.

Caledonian Friend

Lo! when a man by just endeavour
 Grows high in fortune's golden favour,
 Conscious his bold industrial gains
 Are all acquired by honest means;
 The full respect and mark'd esteem
 Of God and man are due to him;
 Even toad-tongued envy must admit
 Fortune for such a man is fit;
 Without hypocrisy or guile,
 In thought or deed, in word or smile,
 He prospers on, beloved among
 The people from whose ranks he sprung.
 No bombast arrogance he shows
 To needy friends or haughty foes.
 But with considerate eye surveys
 His neighbours in their struggling ways;
 And when his generous motives can
 Yield a just aid, he helps them on,
 Happy that he's empowered to give
 Himself and others room to live;
 He covets not the fraudulent spoil
 Which others wrest from sweating toil;
 But with a candid Christian view
 Renders to every man his due.
 And for his generous honest pains,
 God's favour in return he gains;
 His purse, his heart and dwelling place
 O'erflow with plenty, love, and peace;
 His years with social comfort bright,
 Roll on like waves of golden light,
 And when at length, he sinks to die,
 No gloomy record meets his eye;
 No black defraud, or usury crime,
 Stalks from the nooks of by-gone time;
 No frowning ghost of things ill-got,
 No poor man's hopes betray'd or bought,
 Stand on his spirit's awful road,
 Crying for vengeance to his God.
 No, but his soul retires away
 As placid as a sunset ray,
 Uprising, like a white-wing'd dove
 To his reward of life and love.
 In what rich blessings earth would swim
 If men would live and die like him;
 Surely on earth such men are rare,

But yet, thank heaven such men are there!
 Witness our Caledonian friend
 Worthy to triumph and ascend,
 Whose hand a splendid fortune gave,
 The poor ones of our town to save;
 While others thro' the whole year round
 Grasped hugged, and hoarded pound on pound,
 His ready purse was at the need
 Of every sect, and class, and creed;
 Courteous and free, to many a one
 He proved the good Samaritan;
 Yet all the golden boons he gave
 His name from slander could not save.
 What was this generous man's reward:—
 Oh! tale perfidious to record,
 The flint-sould bites of pounds and pence
 Grew shamed by his munificence,
 Conspired against his fame, and soon
 Godless detraction was his boon.
 Not before heaven's offended eye
 Lives there a sin of uglier dye
 Than that of foul ingratitude,
 Committed by the "Unco Guid."
 The City well may curse the day
 When his high spirit fell a prey
 To the low shoneen aristocrats
 That tracked his feet like hungry rats.
 Since the first hour he mix'd among
 The truckling, hugging, Corporate gang,
 Some wayward shadow undefined
 Has crossed the sunshine of his mind;
 Perhaps the rascal-atmosphere
 Which now and then he breathed there,
 Has put him on his guard to shun
 The shoneen plague-spot of the town.
 Kind hearts are easiest turned away,
 And spoil'd like pliant potter's clay,
 For the vile breathings of the mean
 The purest souls will taint and stain;
 And thus this diamond, rich and bright,
 Has been deprived of half its light
 By ear-wigs in the guise of friends
 Who bored him for their sordid ends.
 Till his great popular power, at length,
 Was lost, as Sampson lost his strength,
 By simple confidence — and then
 The envious Philistines rushed in,
 And quenched the glorious giant's sight,
 But soon they felt the giant's might.
 Ha! noble heart, had you but done
 Here, what you said — but turn'd to shun,
 The Philistines you'd humble down,
 And shake the pillars of the town.

ALUMINA AND SHOP STEWARDS

PART ONE

THE recent two months long dispute at the Alumina project site raised many issues for the future of workers, trade unions and the industrial development of the country. An indication of the attitude of some of the shop stewards on the job was given in a letter to the British building industry newspaper "Construction News" on June 12 by Thomas O'Shea, one of the leading stewards on the site. As this paper has only a small readership in Ireland and as the issues raised have serious implications for workers, especially Limerick workers, we have decided to reprint Thomas O'Shea's letter in full. In the September edition of the "Limerick Socialist" we will deal with some of the more important questions raised in the letter, in particular with the description of the Irish trade union movement as "a monkey on the backs" of the workers, and of the need to "get rid of it."

Sir,

I was interested to read in your article concerning the Aughinish Island project, Co. Limerick, that a British Government report was highly critical of Alcan's handling of industrial relations as long ago as 1972.

John Pidgeon's comments, too, have a message relevant in the dispute now causing Aughinish to be unmanageable.

As a shop steward on this project I am more aware than most of the extent of frustration among the workforce as a result of negative answers from A.C.L. put through the companies on site. Industrial relations between the companies and their workforces are in general terms good.

As Mr. Pidgeon suggests, a site agreement which should have been signed before any work began can help industrial relations.

In Britain, in the Lynemouth case it might well have been desirable.

However, in Aughinish we, the workforce, have an added problem to overcome. We did have a site agreement right from the outset. This was negotiated by union officials who were not drawn from our industry and who, in effect, made a mess of it.

Over the months many, many issues have arisen from this agreement and our officials have been given the run-around by a more experienced management team. Bonus is but the latest issue.

The site is being used as a blue print for other projects hopefully to be set up in Ireland. In particular, no Irishman like myself would object to this so long as the long-standing and acceptable practices within our industry apply in Ireland as in any other place in Europe.

Ireland doesn't have a "national working rule agreement" but a carry-on from a county by county set-up, which is laughable were it not so serious.

Basic rights, too, are being denied. I'm referring to any person's right to speak for her/himself at his/her place of work. We must at least have this or democracy goes out of the window.

There is a tradition in Ireland that no one passes a picket.

This has been the cause of many problems on site to

date. However, the stewards are now confident that we can put across to the men we represent that this stupid tradition must be buried and that discipline must prevail.

If necessary, we are prepared to demonstrate this by crossing a picket line ourselves, one obviously put there by an individual before having the sanction of the rest of the workforce.

This is not to say that pickets will not take place. Our union officials must play a bigger part here than to date, and alongside the workforce stewards make discipline an issue so that union members can always be seen to have adhered to procedure. Providing we have a say in the drawing up of those said procedures.

In conclusion, I want to refer to the last two paragraphs in your Aughinish coverage.

The stewards did not back the steel fixers just like that, end of story! We recommended that they should withdraw their labour (and if you like, in so doing backed the steelfixers). But we all knew that the issues which were not being solved would on a continuous basis put a picket of some description on the gate.

Knowing, too, that the workforce was to be enlarged by the influx of Press-O'Neill men by June-July that things were likely to get even worse.

We wanted then and still, to have a strike-free site (not a problem-free site; we are not so naive enough to expect that), a site in which stewards and union officials, along with management, could act as trouble shooters, anticipating and solving problems as, or before, they developed. To this end the workforce have made two conditions for return to work, which, incidentally we cannot put across officially to our employers because our union officials will not talk to us. There's stupidity!

Condition A - That stewards be given the right (now denied) to negotiate alongside our union officials on all site matters affecting our wage packets and conditions.

Condition B - In two parts

1 - That there should be a site minimum rate, 25-33½ per cent of basic payable by all companies until

2 - the set-up of a measured scheme which would allow us to earn 100 per cent of basic, to be implemented within a month of return of work.

Now, as I see it, the first of these we have already been given by our employers, or so we have been led to believe through the grapevine of the press. It only remains to convince our union officials.

So what's the hassle? With these two items out of the way there could be an immediate return to work. We the stewards would then be at the table to add our pennyworth to the re-negotiation of the site agreement, which is due soon anyway and which we ought to be discussing at the moment.

I am hopeful that ACL will climb down off their horse—we can't since we are already in the mire.

To the management, who like us make their living from construction and whom many of us look upon as the other half of the team on site, I'd make this comment: We know your hands have been tied, as have ours, but we have one hand free now; when you have also, we could shake on it and in the eighties teach the monkey on our back or get rid of it.

Thomas O'Shea

101, Ballemonde Rd.
Overton.
Frodsham
Cheshire.